THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) to (c) The unemployment figure of around 9 million is estimated on usual status basis as per the employment and unemployment survey conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation during 1999-2000. Inadequate growth of the economy, growth rate of labour force being higher than that of work force are among the major reasons for t*he* increasing unemployment during 1993-94 to 1999-2000. Estimates beyond 2000 are not available.

(d) and (e) Government is targeting creation of around 5 crore employment opportunities during the 10th plan period. The approach to Tenth Plan focusses on providing gainful high quality employment to the additions to the labour force and it is listed as one of the monitorable objectives for the 10th Plan and beyond. The growth strategy of 10th Plan has laid emphasis on rapid growth of those sectors, which are likely to create high quality employment opportunities and deal with the policy constraints, which discourage growth of employment. Particular attention has been paid to the policy environment influencing a wide range of economic activitites, which have a large employment potential.

Enforcement of Trade Union Act in Sikkim

1952. SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1510 given in Rajya Sabha on the 16th December 2004 and state:

(a) whether the Trade Union Act, 1926 extends to all States of India;

(b) if so, under which provisions of the Act, Sikkim has been excluded from the coverage of this Act; and

(c) if not, the action taken by Government to extend and enforce the Act in Sikkim?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. The Trade Unions Act, 1926 extends to the whole of India.

(b) and (c) Keeping in view the present scenario of industrial climate

and industrial backwardness in the State of Sikkim, Government of Sikkim has informed that for the time being they are not considering enforcement of the Trade Union Act, 1926.

Interest rate on EPF

1953. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that with the retention of 9.5 per cent interest four crore EPF subscribers are happy, and their 37.17 lakh counterparts whose deposits are managed by 2,491 private players are in a state of shock; and

(b) if so, whether Government are also thinking of bringing their interest rate at par with that of EPF subscribers so that avowed aim of Government to ensure equality of benefit to similarly placed employees is not denied to them?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) and (b) The benefit of interest rate of 9.5 per cent is available to the members of the Employees' Provident Funds as well as employees of the exempted establishments.

As per terms and conditions for grant of exemption under section 17 of the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, the rate of interest declared by the Board of Trustees of the exempted establishment shall not be lower than the rate of interest declared by the Central Government. In the event of any deficiency in the interest declared by the Board of Trustees, the same is to be made good by the employer to bring it upto the statutory limit.

Fixation of interest rate on EPF

1954. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that uncertainty over fixation of rate of interest on EPF is hanging for long time;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;